

Joe Trauger

Vice President

Human Resources Policy

March 5, 2012

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
House Education & Workforce Committee
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member
House Education & Workforce Committee
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20512

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Miller:

On behalf of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), I am writing to express our appreciation for your leadership in creating skilled workforce legislation, and specifically, your efforts to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Manufacturers are significantly impacted by the lack of high-skilled workers to meet the needs of advanced manufacturing. We need immediate and long-term solutions to replenish the skilled workforce pipeline and help bring America out of the economic recession.

The NAM is the nation's largest industrial trade association, representing small and large manufacturers in every industrial sector and in all 50 states. The NAM's mission is to enhance the competitiveness of the manufacturing economy by advocating policies that are conducive to U.S. economic growth.

The Federal workforce development system, as it exists today, is a complicated web of boards and separated programs that are often unworkable for employers to participate in or benefit from. Improving this program through reauthorization would help employers traverse the workforce development system and enable American workers to receive the high-skilled training our country and employers so desperately need.

The NAM believes workforce training funds should be focused on the type of training programs that will result in a job. We applaud the Committee's efforts to recognize the value of industry-based credentials and their importance to employers in the context of workforce development priorities, but we believe the legislation, as currently drafted, needs to go further. The NAM supports the prioritization of industry-recognized credentials in a manner consistent with language contained in the America Works Act (H.R. 497). The inclusion of credentials in the state and local plans, and in the Job Corps program, shows the commitment the Committee has towards these valuable programs, but an emphasis also needs to be reflected with regard to funding.

Additionally, manufacturers are pleased to see a significant effort to reform the WIA system by reducing the bureaucracy and allowing workforce training dollars to focus on training. For example, we support the elimination of sequence of service, the steps towards eliminating

many outdated and unnecessary workforce boards, and a less prescriptive and bureaucratic board structure to increase employer involvement.

A recent study identified nearly 600,000 jobs that are going unfilled due to a lack of skilled workers. We need access to individuals with the technical skills necessary for modern manufacturing. We have identified the skills and certification necessary to begin to fill that gap and believe existing workforce training programs, such as the Workforce Investment Act, should prioritize and focus resources on those programs. This bill takes a step in that direction and addresses other deficiencies in the program. We look forward to working with the Committee as the bill progresses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Trauger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "T".

Joe Trauger
Vice President
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